

calmly borne by a submissive Oriental race like the ancient Egyptians, but it naturally proved a stumbling-block to the less patient temperament of their European conquerors, reform Accordingly In the reign of King Ptolemy III. Euergetes a decree was passed that henceforth the movable Egyptian year should be converted into a fixed solar year by the Interpolation of one day at the end of every four years, " in order that the seasons may do their duty perpetually according to the present constitution of the world, and that It may not happen, through the shifting of the star by one day In four years, that some of the public festivals which are now held in the winter should ever be celebrated in the summer, and that other festivals now held in the summer should hereafter be celebrated in the winter, as has happened before, and must happen again If the year of three hundred and sixty-five clays be retained/^β The decree was passed in the year 239 or 238 B.C. by the high priests, scribes, and other dignitaries of the Egyptian church assembled in convocation at Canopus ; but we cannot doubt that the measure, though It embodied native Egyptian science, was prompted by the king or his Macedonian advisers.¹ This sage attempt to reform the erratic calendar was not permanently successful. The change may indeed have been carried out during the reign of the king who Instituted It, but it was abandoned by the year 196 B.C. at latest, as we learn from the celebrated Inscription known as the Rosetta stone, in which a month of the Macedonian calendar Is equated to the corresponding month of the movable Egyptian year.² And the testimony of Gemlnus, which I have cited, proves that in the

follow-
 ing century the festivals were still revolving *In the old*
 style.

The reform which the Macedonian king had
 vainly institution
 attempted to impose upon his people was accomplished
 by ^{fixed}
 the practical Romans when they took over the
 admnistra-

¹ Copies of the decree in hiero- Ptolemies (London, 1895),
 pp. 205 ^e
 glyp^hic, demotic, and Greek have been *sqq*^ 226 *sqq*. The star
 mentioned in ^{omans}
 found inscribed on stones in Egypt. the decree is the Dog-
 star (Sirius).
 See Ch. Michel, *Recueil ^{tf} Inscriptions* See below, pp. 34 *sqq*.
Grecques (Brussels, 1900), pp. 415^e,
 No. 551; W. Dittenberger, *Ori^mtis* ² W.' Dittenberger,
Ori^mtis Graed
Graed Imcriptions Selectae (Leipsic, *Inscnptiones Selectae*, vol. i.
 pp. 140
 1903-1905), vol. i. pp. 91 *sqq*.) No. *sqq*.) No. 90, with
 note 25 of the
 56 ; J. P. Mahaffy, *The Empire of the* editor.